

1 WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

2
3 1. A method for determining a warranty start date for a product
4 comprising the steps of:

5 defining a warranty start event;
6 generating a timestamp with the product after detection of the
7 occurrence of said warranty start event; and,
8 storing said timestamp in a memory.
9

10 2. A method for determining a warranty start date for a product as
11 defined by claim 1 further comprising the step of reading said timestamp from
12 said memory to determine the warranty start date.
13

14 3. A method for determining a warranty start date as defined by
15 claim 1 wherein said memory is internal to the product.
16

17 4. A method for determining a warranty start date as defined by
18 claim 1 wherein said step of generating a timestamp comprises obtaining said
19 timestamp from an internal clock.
20

21 5. A method for determining a warranty start date as defined by
22 claim 1 wherein the product is connected to a data network, and wherein said
23 step of generating a timestamp comprises obtaining said timestamp over the
24 network.
25

26 6. A method for determining a warranty start date as defined by
27 claim 1 wherein the product is connected to a data network, and wherein said
28 memory is remotely located from the product and is accessible over the
29 network.
30

7. A method for determining a warranty start date as defined by claim 1 wherein the product is for producing output, and wherein said warranty start event comprises production of a specified quantity of the output.

8. A method for determining a warranty start date as defined by claim 7 wherein the product is for connection to a data network, and wherein said step of generating a timestamp comprises obtaining a timestamp over the network.

9. A method for determining a warranty start date as defined by claim 8 wherein said step of obtaining a timestamp over the network comprises connecting to a time server over the network, querying said time server with a network time protocol query for a time value, and obtaining a time value from said time server in a network time protocol.

10. A method for determining a warranty start date as defined by claim 1 wherein said step of storing said timestamp in said memory further comprises encrypting said timestamp.

11. A method for determining a warranty start date as defined by claim 10 wherein the method further comprises the step of outputting said encrypted timestamp with the product.

12. A method for determining a warranty start date for a product as defined by claim 1 wherein the method further comprises the step of continuously searching for occurrence of said warranty start event.

13. A method for determining a warranty start date for a computer peripheral, the peripheral for connection to a network and for producing output, the method comprising the steps of:

1 defining a warranty start event comprising production of a
2 specified amount of output;

3 continuously searching for occurrence of said warranty start
4 event;

5 generating a timestamp with the product after detection of the
6 occurrence of said warranty start event, said generation of a timestamp
7 comprising querying a timeserver connected to the network for a time value;

8 encrypting said timestamp;

9 storing said encrypted timestamp in a non-volatile memory in the
10 product; and,

11 outputting said encrypted timestamp from the product.

12
13 14. A method for determining a warranty start date as defined by
14 claim 13 wherein the computer peripheral product is for producing documents,
15 and wherein:

16 said warranty start event comprises production of a specified
17 number of documents; and,

18 said encrypted timestamp can be retrieved from said memory and
19 output on a product test page.

20
21 15. A computer program product for causing a product to determine a
22 warranty start date for the product, the computer program product comprising
23 computer readable instructions embedded in a computer readable medium, the
24 instructions when executed by the product causing the product to:

25 retrieve a stored warranty start event definition from a memory;

26 generate a timestamp with the product after detection of the
27 occurrence of said warranty start event;

28 store said timestamp in a memory; and,

29 output said timestamp from said memory when prompted to
30 determine the warranty start date.

1 16. A computer program product as defined by claim 15 wherein the
2 product comprises a product for connection to a network, and wherein causing
3 the peripheral to generate a timestamp comprises causing the peripheral to
4 obtain a current time value over the network.
5

6 17. A computer program product as defined by claim 16 wherein
7 causing the peripheral to obtain said current time value comprises causing the
8 peripheral to query a time server over the network for a current time value in a
9 standard protocol.
10

11 18. A computer program product as defined by claim 15 wherein the
12 product is connected to a network and wherein causing the product to store said
13 time stamp in a memory comprises causing the product to store said timestamp
14 in a memory remote from the product via the network.
15

16 19. A computer program product as defined by claim 15 wherein the
17 product is for producing units of output, and wherein said warranty start event
18 comprises production of a specified number of units of output.
19

20 20. A computer program product as defined by claim 15 wherein the
21 product is a document production apparatus for producing documents, wherein
22 the computer program further causes the product to encrypt said timestamp,
23 and wherein causing the product to output said timestamp comprises causing
24 the product to output a diagnostic test document when prompted, at least a
25 portion of said diagnostic test page comprising said encrypted timestamp.
26

27 21. A computer program product for causing a computer peripheral
28 to determine a warranty start date for the peripheral, the peripheral for
29 producing documents and for connection to a network, the computer program
30 product comprising computer readable instructions embedded in a computer

1 readable medium, the instructions when executed by the peripheral causing the
2 peripheral to:
3 retrieve a stored warranty start event definition from a memory,
4 said warranty start event definition comprising production of a specified
5 cumulative number of documents, said memory internal to the peripheral;
6 continually search for occurrence of said warranty start event;
7 obtain a timestamp over the network after detection of the
8 occurrence of said warranty start event by querying of a time server;
9 encrypt said timestamp;
10 store said encrypted timestamp in said memory; and,
11 output said encrypted timestamp on a diagnostic document from
12 said memory when prompted to determine said warranty start date.